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## Diplomat Faces Hill Punishment

# Canal Pact Struggle Chalks Up a Casualty

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Robert M. Sayre, inspector general of the Foreign Service, apparently has become a casualty of the bitter struggle for ratification of the Panama Canal treaties.

Sayre, 53, last winter incurred the wrath of conservative Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., one of the leaders of the anti-canal forces which came close to defeating the controversial pacts. As a result, Helms has put what the Senate calls a "hold" on the career diplomat's nomination to be ambassador to Brazil.

While a "hold" by a single senator is not necessarily fatal to a nomination, it usually is because of Senate custom and rules.

Helms is sticking to his right not to make a time agreement on debate, in effect setting the scene for a filibuster in which he might well be joined by other anti-canal treaty senators.

Sayre, one of the most experienced and respected Latin experts in the State Department, evoked the animosity of Helms and that of other treaty opponents when it was revealed last February that Sayre had warned the Panamanians of circumstances that might have led to the U.S. arrest of Gen. Omar Torrijos' brother, Moises Torrijos, on narcotics charges.

**HELMS WROTE** the State Department a letter on March 9 outlining his objections to the Sayre nomination.

Informed sources indicated that Helms also has been in contact with Brazilian diplomats about the nomi-



**ROBERT M. SAYRE**  
Hopes go glimmering



**SEN. JESSE HELMS**  
Goes on hold

nation and is giving widely circulated TV and press interviews that are undermining Sayre with the government of Brazil.

State Department officials said privately they are appalled that Helms has turned the confirmation process into a personal vendetta against Sayre.

But they also acknowledged that there probably is nothing the executive branch can do to save Sayre's nomination, even though it has cleared the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

State Department officials are now considering whether it would be better to withdraw the nomination. Some officials at State believe, how-

ever, the nomination should be fought through if Foreign Service officers abroad are to be expected in the future to obey orders from Washington.

According to knowledgeable officials, the trouble started for Sayre while he was ambassador to Panama six years ago.

A New York grand jury in 1972 indicted Moises Torrijos in absentia as a co-conspirator in a heroin trafficking case.

IT WAS DIVULGED at a closed session of the Senate Intelligence Committee that Gen. Omar Torrijos was informed of the indictment by John Ingersoll, then the highest ranking drug enforcement officer of the U.S. government. Six months later, the CIA learned that Moises Torrijos was aboard a ship about to enter the Panama Canal Zone, where American agents would have arrested him.

Apparently it was decided at the White House level that the arrest of Torrijos' brother would cause more trouble with Panama than it would be worth.

According to information developed by the Senate committee, the State Department told Ambassador Sayre in Panama City to alert the general that Washington knew of his brother's travel plans. Moises Torrijos got off the ship in Venezuela and flew in to Panama.

The administration's view is that Sayre was only carrying out his orders. But Helms sees Sayre's actions as an obstruction of justice.

The former ambassador to Brazil, John Crimmins, retired several months ago when it was thought the respected Sayre would be a shoo-in

Torrijos, Omar